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Recovery News

DISASTER ASSISTANCE APPLICATION DEADLINE QUICKLY APPROACHING

PASADENA, Calif. —There are less than two weeks left to apply for federal and state disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the State of California. The deadline to apply for federal and state disaster assistance is at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2008.

Individual assistance continues to be provided for residents with property damages from the wildfires. Here is a summary of disaster assistance funding:

- **\$60 million** – Approved (SBA) loans to homeowners, renters and business owners.
- **\$8.7 million** – Housing assistance grants from FEMA for rental expenses, home repair or replacement.
- **\$3.5 million** – Assistance with other needs from FEMA and the State of California for losses and damage to personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, moving expenses and other disaster-related costs.
- **\$1.7 million** – Approved California State Supplemental Grants from the California Department of Social Services for those who have received the maximum grants for housing and other needs from FEMA and the state.
- **\$185,211** in federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance funds has been disbursed by the California Employment Development Department to individuals unemployed by the wildfires.

During the holiday period, the registration line at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585** will be closed on Jan. 1. Other than this holiday closure date, the registration line will be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday until close of business on Jan. 9, 2008. Those who have registered are reminded to go online at: www.fema.gov/assistance/process/update_assistance.shtm or call FEMA to report any changes in personal or insurance information and to check the status of their application.

Beyond the dollars provided to Southern California residents, much individualized service is involved in wildfire recovery.

- **18,685** Californians have registered for state and federal disaster assistance.
- **15,003** FEMA registrants visited assistance centers seeking disaster recovery help and mitigation information in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, French and other languages. All disaster recovery centers are now closed.
- **8,175** FEMA inspections have been completed in disaster-designated counties. These inspections of wildfire-damaged structures are a prerequisite for property owners to qualify for federal and state grants and low-interest loans to repair, replace or rebuild.

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FEMA's community relations specialists walk disaster neighborhoods to offer recovery information and assistance. To date they have spoken with:

19,457	Residents
6,910	Businesses
1,050*	Faith-Based Organizations
275	Community-Based Organizations
284	Local Governments
499	Local Agencies
210	Schools

(*Revised from 12/22 weekly summary release, NR 83, published as 1,079)

Crisis counseling for wildfire victims is available. Those who may be feeling overwhelmed as a result of the wildfires or need disaster-related counseling may call the hotline number for their county:

Los Angeles	1-800-854-7771
Orange	1-866-830-6011
Riverside	1-800-706-7500
San Bernardino	1-888-743-1478
San Diego	1-800-479-3339
Santa Barbara	1-888-868-1649
Ventura	1-800-671-0887

People living or working in the seven disaster-designated counties whose jobs were affected by California wildfires may apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) from the California State Employment Development Department until **Jan. 9, 2008**.

The fastest and easiest method for individuals to file claims for DUA benefits is online at <http://www.edd.ca.gov/fleclaim.htm>. Claimants can also file by telephone:

English	1-800-300-5616
Spanish	1-800-326-8937
Cantonese	1-800-547-3506
Mandarin	1-866-303-0706
Vietnamese	1-800-547-2058
TTY (non-voice)	1-800-815-9387

The California State Bar has a **legal assistance hotline at 1-866-636-9041**. Wildfire victims can call the line with disaster-related basic legal questions, such as replacing lost documents, housing-landlord-tenant disputes, and insurance issues.

Public assistance grants will be made available on a cost share basis to state, county and local governments and qualified non-profits for eligible emergency work such as debris removal and reimbursement for protective measures, plus repairs to roads, public utilities, public buildings, and public parks.

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FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) coordinates overall state-agency response to major disasters in support of local government. OES is also responsible for maintaining the State Emergency Plan and coordinating California's preparedness, mitigation and recovery efforts.

SBA is the federal government's primary source of money for the long-term rebuilding of disaster-damaged private property. SBA helps homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes, and private non-profit organizations fund repairs or rebuilding efforts, and cover the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged personal property. These disaster loans cover uninsured and uncompensated losses and do not duplicate benefits of other agencies or organizations. For information about SBA programs, applicants may call 800-659-2955.